

THE 5 QUESTIONS EVERY EXECUTIVE SHOULD ASK BEFORE LAUNCHING A CHANGE INITIATIVE



Raise your organization's probability of success
by designing change, not reacting to it.

Change doesn't fail in execution — it fails in preparation.

These five questions help executives diagnose whether their organization is truly ready to lead change intentionally, or simply reacting to it. They're deceptively simple but strategically revealing — and each one aligns to the principles of Layered Alignment™, Strategic Tension™, and Change-by-Design™.

1

ARE WE ALIGNED ON WHAT SUCCESS ACTUALLY MEANS?

Most organizations start with goals, not alignment. Before you plan a single activity, ask: What does success look like — and for whom? If ten leaders would answer that differently, you don't have alignment, you have ambiguity.

Layered Alignment™

Alignment must flow up, down, and across — connecting strategy to execution and ensuring leaders stay coherent as conditions evolve.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Without shared definition, progress gets mistaken for motion. Alignment is what ensures speed moves you in the right direction.

2

DO WE HAVE A CLEARLY DEFINED CHANGE STRATEGY — NOT JUST A PROJECT PLAN?

A project plan manages what will happen. A change strategy defines how it will happen — how people will be engaged, how leaders will communicate, and how resistance will be anticipated and addressed.

Change-by-Design™

The discipline of setting the conditions for success before planning the work.

WHY IT MATTERS:

The absence of a defined change strategy is one of the most common root causes of change failure. You can't adopt what people don't understand.

3

ARE OUR LEADERS PREPARED AND POSITIONED TO LEAD THIS CHANGE?

Layered Alignment™

Sponsorship coherence is what turns leadership intent into organizational follow-through.

Sponsorship is not a title — it's a behavior. Executives need to be visible, credible, and consistent in how they champion change. Ask: Do our sponsors understand what effective sponsorship looks like, and are they equipped to deliver it?

WHY IT MATTERS:

The speed and depth of adoption will mirror the clarity and consistency of leadership behavior.

4

HAVE WE BUILT READINESS INTO THE DESIGN — OR ARE WE ASSUMING IT WILL HAPPEN ALONG THE WAY?

Readiness doesn't emerge naturally; it must be built. Ask: What are we doing to prepare people emotionally, cognitively, and operationally for what's coming? Readiness must be part of the design, not the clean-up.

Strategic Tension™

The intentional surfacing of gaps between current and future state to generate clarity, urgency, and aligned action.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Reactive organizations launch change before they're ready. Intentional ones use readiness as a strategic advantage.

5

ARE WE STRUCTURED TO LEARN AND ADAPT IN MOTION?

Change isn't a reaction

— it's a discipline. The more practiced your organization is at learning, the more resilient it becomes.

Even the best-designed change will surface surprises. The question is: do you have a mechanism to capture lessons, test adjustments, and evolve mid-flight?

WHY IT MATTERS:

Change maturity is measured by your ability to adapt without losing alignment.

Change doesn't fail in execution — it fails in preparation.

If your answers exposed uncertainty, assumptions, or misalignment, you're not alone. That's the difference between change management and change leadership.

Meaningful Change Consulting helps executives raise their probability of success by aligning leadership, strategy, and culture before the work begins.

Next Step: Design Your Change for Success

Ready to design your next change for success? Schedule an executive advisory conversation now.

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